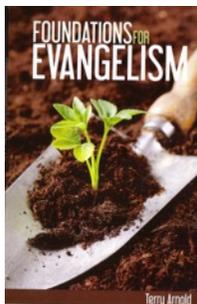


Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

****New Book****



Our new book 'Foundations For Evangelism' is a comparison of modern evangelism and Biblical evangelism. The Parable of the Sower is expounded and answers given to the huge 'fall away' rates of today. The author believes Matt.7:21-23 shows 'the greatest deception' needing to be addressed. There is much teaching in this book on how to *prepare a heart to receive the Gospel*. The book is full of timeless quotes rarely seen today. The appendixes alone are worthy of having as reference material: 'Evangelism to the Cults'; 'Mind Control'; 'The Alpha Course'; 'Charles Finney'...This 157 page book is an excellent reference book, or for Bible studies. (\$14.90) The website has a list of quotes from each chapter (www.taministries.net - go to 'News')

Travelling Bus Ministry 2012

Terry & Beth hope to travel to most Southern states again this year. If any new churches wish to be included in the itinerary, please contact Terry. Dates have not yet been finalised.

Prayer/Praise Points

- Praise the Lord for His provision throughout this year and for every expense being paid.

- Pray for open doors for Terry and Beth to travel again this year.

Subscription Form

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'But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern [diakrisis] both good and evil', (Heb.5:14)

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TA Ministries is a non-denominational faith ministry,
teaching, informing and equipping the church.

Editor: Terry Arnold (MABS; Dip. Bib. & Min., Dip. Teaching)

The editor may not necessarily agree with all the views expressed by subscribers in this newsletter.

We welcome comments and items contributed by readers. Unless otherwise requested, these may be included in following newsletters at the discretion of the editor.

Articles in this newsletter may be copied or reproduced provided it is in context and proper credit and references are given. We encourage distribution of this newsletter that others might be taught, informed and equipped.

This Newsletter is distributed bi-monthly *free* of charge. The cost to this ministry is approximately \$20.00 per subscriber annually. Any donations to help with these expenses is received with gratitude.

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Changes To Diakrisis Newsletter

After feedback from readers we have decided to increase the print font size for easier reading. As well, we have added another 4 pages to the newsletter.

We have also added graphics (pictures) to the hardcopy. (The e-mail version will have colour). We appreciate any feedback from readers on these changes.

Editor's Comment

Since recently publishing the book '*Foundations For Evangelism*', (which in one of the chapters, defines and details the points of the Gospel), I have been intently viewing 'Gospel' messages on web-sites and in the media. I recently reviewed past and recent Christmas and Easter messages delivered by our Australian 'Christian' leaders. My reaction to the content was '*where is the Gospel in all this?*' In message after message there was little or no mention of sin, repentance, the substitutionary atonement, or our need of it. In some messages there was no mention of Christ at all! Most were 'feel good', 'do good', 'be good' and an encouragement to engender the 'Christmas/Easter 'spirit'' and to do so with 'national pride'. Most of our so-called 'religious' leaders have now evolved into part-time politicians and social commentators, rather than ministers of the Gospel!

Where is the Gospel today? In most Christian tracts there is little mention of sin, its consequences and its sure judgement. Yet, you surely cannot have a 'Gospel' without the mention of sin? How would anyone see the need of the Saviour if one is not aware of being a sinner under judgement? Why would I want a cure if I do not know the disease? The world is all a person needs if they are unaware of their spiritual state? The 'gospel' given by these luminaries offers 'your best life now' and why wouldn't anyone want that? Just tack Jesus onto a long list of pagan beliefs - and hey presto - 'eternal life'!...and maybe Jesus will also give me some other benefits in this life too?

Where is the Gospel today? How many pulpiteers are really presenting the Gospel with sin and judgement included? Are not many churches today engrossed in programmes that make Christians feel good and have their 'felt needs' met? Many churches today are doing wonderful social works of community benefit, yet rarely preach the true Gospel with sin and judgement included. The Gospel should produce fear and trembling in the unbelievers of our day.

The Gospel is defined in the first book of Corinthians chapter 15 as the death, burial and resurrection of Christ on our behalf because we were sinners in the sight of a perfect and Holy God. God's wrath upon sin was satisfied by the bloody sacrifice of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. If this message is truncated or minimised, or, as in many cases, totally missing - God has been greatly disobeyed, and churches will continue to fill with false conversions - unfruitful *professors* of Christ instead of overcoming *possessors* of His Spirit.

To be sure, we live in times when men's hearts are hardened as never before, and religionists are often rightly viewed as hypocrites. It's an increasingly hard ground that we must plough nowadays. Nevertheless, even if we never see a convert produced from our preaching or witnessing - we must never reduce or soften the message, or make it more palatable to this perverse generation. The faithful Puritan preacher, Richard Greenham (1535-1594), worked 20 years in Cambridge Shire County with only *one* family converted. Yet the same faith and

Continued next page >

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

Hello Terry, Thank you very much for your newsletters. They are always very informative and challenging. I particularly found your article on 'Marriage, Divorce and Re-marriage' interesting...I was divorced prior to my now 30 year marriage...You covered the topic quite well in your article, but not specifically as it relates to those of us who may have been married and divorced before we gave our lives to Christ, then remarried...

Are our past sins (this one included) paid for by Jesus Christ on the cross and no longer accounted to us?...Our particular scenario wasn't addressed...When we break the commandments in Scripture prior to being saved (possibly unbeknownst to us at that time), then become Christians, are there sins (including the re-marriage one) that could still be held against us on Judgement Day?

(Name withheld at editor's discretion)

Editor's reply: Unfortunately space forbade a more extensive covering of some of the questions that would arise from this article...It never does hurt to ask God for forgiveness for past iniquity. If we say we are free from sin then we are to be found '*liars*' (1Jn.1:10). But knowing we have an '*advocate with the Father*' (1Jn.2:1) and have been forgiven - to then '*press on toward the mark*' - **FORGETTING** what lies behind us (Phil.3:14). Why? Because God has! Past sins before or after becoming a Christian were paid for by our *Saviour Jesus Christ* on the cross and will no longer be held to our account. If '*some sins (including re-marriage) could still be held against us on Judgement Day*' - then Christ died needlessly. If we are true Christians indwelt by the Holy Spirit, then the blood of Christ covers '*ALL sin*' (1Jn.1:7) - and He will finish the work in us that He began (Phil.1:6). Scripture promises that we are '*a new creation*' (2Cor.5:17) - therefore, as John states, spiritually we do not sin because we are **Born Again** (1Jn.3:6; 5:18)...it is now our body of death that sins (Rom.7) and always will, until the day that it is also redeemed. My advice is to enjoy your marriage free of guilt. You are not under law, but under **GRACE**.

Dear Terry and Family, Have a Happy Safe and Spiritually uplifting New Year. I pray your work will expand to many more peoples and places. Thank you for all your research and study to make my walk with the Lord more edifying this last year.

(M.H., Sth Aust.)

Dear Terry, Thankyou for your great ministry here last weekend...and the opportunity to buy some terrific resources...
(T.R., Qld)

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

Dear Terry...what can I say, I finished reading your new book [‘Foundations For Evangelism’] late last night. I was sooooo disappointed when it stopped at P.153. Seriously, this is one of the few good (great) Bible based books I have read published in the 20/21st century. Not a lot of new material, but what a punch in revision, with great Scriptural backing, some very pertinent points often overlooked and such a breath of fresh air compared to modern ‘evangelism’. Some great quotes also! I believe God will gain great glory from the use of this book by many of the Saints. It has given me a greater zeal for the lost and has revitalised my desire to preach the Gospel. I spoke to 3 today and 2 yesterday about salvation in answer to prayer and as a consequence of starting to read your book. THANK YOU SO MUCH for sharing your wisdom and knowledge. This will assist me in obeying the Great Commission. What a winner, inspiring, exciting, Godly and such a helpful little ready reckoner of evangelism!

(M.H., Sth. Aust)

Terry, I have a question relating to your article on ‘Marriage, Divorce and Re-marriage’ in the latest newsletter. You wrote ‘those who have divorced or re-married and they see these truths in Scripture, should confess the mistake, seek forgiveness and ‘redeem the time’ - make the most of the situation they are in now (1 Cor.7:24; Eph.5:16; Gal.4:5)’. What do you mean by ‘redeem the time’?...Is this alluding to making up for past mistakes by outward works, such as intensive bible study, volunteering, etc?

(C.K., Sth. Aust)

Editor’s reply: I was expecting this question as I did not have enough room in the article to explain what exactly was meant by the statement *‘redeeming the time’*. By this I mean to make the most of the marriage situation one is in now, even if it was a wrong, unscriptural or bad decision in the beginning. 1Cor.7:17,20,24 teach this. In the context of re-marriage, I believe people should study the Scriptures, settle in their hearts what is right and then glorify God in whatever marriage they are in now, (assuming most people could not possibly go back to their former partners). I did not necessarily mean to immerse oneself in *‘outwardly works, such as intensive bible study, volunteering’* in any way to make up for a mistake - for that would imply works salvation. But rather, to go forward and not look back. It just means getting on with the job of living the Christian life. And in the context of a second marriage, that means to be in relationship as Christ is to the church (Eph.5:22-33).

Hi Terry, been getting your newsletter for years and love to read it, even though the truth can be a bit upsetting at times.

(T.L., Sydney)

Gospel honoured Richard Baxter’s Kidderminster ministry (1641-1658) where in 17 years there were 5,600 converts of which it was claimed none fell away.

The Gospel message of the cross will always be ‘foolishness’ to the lost - no matter how it is presented. Best we deliver it in it’s entirety, rather than tickle the ears of our hearers?

The Gospel has somehow today evaporated in a haze of platitudes and mealy mouthed slogans. It is in danger of being lost to much of western Christianity. We need to go back and properly define it and present it clearly again in this day. I urge pastors, elders and all who would share Christ’s salvation, to preach the whole Gospel; to utterly and truthfully deliver the reason why man must have this narrow salvation - or perish. It needs to be trumpeted, as never before, without shame or embarrassment at this late hour in our land.

Terry Arnold

The Truth is Sometimes Lonely

‘According to the teaching of the Bible, one thing only matters, and that is the truth. The Holy Spirit will honour nothing but the truth, His own truth. But that, He will honour. To me the most marvellous thing of all is that, the moment you come to such a conclusion, you realize that in a sense nothing else matters...Nothing matters in the spiritual realm except truth, the truth given by the Holy Spirit, the truth that can be honoured by the Holy Spirit.

Is there anything more glorious in the whole of the Old Testament than the way in which this great principle stands out? God often used individual men, or but two or three, against hordes and masses. Is there anything more exhilarating than the doctrine of the remnant? While the majority had gone wrong, the ones and the two’s saw the truth.

Take a man like Jeremiah. All the false prophets were against him. There is a man who had to stand alone. Poor Jeremiah - how he hated it and disliked it! He did not like being unpopular, he did not like standing on his own, and being ridiculed and laughed at, and spat upon, as it were; but he had the truth of God, and so he endured it all. He decided at times to say nothing, but the word was like fire in his bones, and he had to go on speaking it. Obloquy and abuse were heaped upon him, but it did not matter; he was God’s spokesman and God’s representative.*

Similarly Moses had to stand alone when he came down from the Mount where he had met God. To stand in isolation from one’s fellows, but with God, is the great doctrine of the Old Testament in many ways. And it is emphasized in the New Testament also’.

Martyn Lloyd Jones

*A false accusation or a malicious misrepresentation of someone’s words or actions.

The Apostasy In The End

The Scriptures are replete with references to an *apostasy* in the end times. Yet how often do we hear this mentioned by popular preachers or in churches today? Amazingly many churches are not even aware there is a current apostasy! Many actually teach the opposite - that there is, or will be, a revival of the faith! But if there is no current apostasy then why are most denominations no longer teaching what they used to teach on a wide range of issues? Most have done backflips in the areas of women in ministry, homosexuality, same sex marriage, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit...to mention just a few. *The last few decades have witnessed the greatest change in the western Church in her entire history.*

The word 'apostasy' comes from '*apostasia*' which means a religious defection or a falling away *from what was*. It is a falling away from '*the faith*' (Jude 3). Today the vast majority of Christians are ignorant that the churches are indeed falling away from truth. Three reasons for this are evident: 1. They are ignorant of what the churches *used to teach*; 2. They are ignorant of, or re-interpreting, what the Scriptures do teach; 3. Their pastors and elders are not informing, teaching and warning them of the *reality of a deepening apostasy*.

Many New Testament books have the apostasy as their major theme (Galatians, 2Thessalonians, Hebrews, Revelation). When something comes up in so many Scriptures, why is it that the voices teaching this are dwindling?

The apostasy is not something that has started recently. Paul taught the Ephesian church for three years and before departing he warned against 'wolves' and false teaching (Acts 20:17-38). If one studies church history one will see an apostasy quite early within the first few centuries - the church became more Roman and less Christian; more hierarchial and less Biblical; more political and less scriptural; and more fractured with heresies and less united in truth.

There are too many Scriptures on the apostasy to list here but lets look at just five that specifically refer to the falling away of the church *in the end* (2Thess.2:3; 1Tim.4:1-3; 2Tim.3:1-5; 4:3-4; Jude 1-25).

The Bible clearly teaches that a great apostasy would occur before the final Antichrist appears (2Thess.2:3) and that we should not be '*deceived*': '*Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away* [*apostasia*] *first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition*' (2Thess.2:3). (The only other place this noun '*apostasia*' is used is Acts 21:21 where it shows a *religious defection*, a falling away from what was).

Many of the passages that explicitly cite a future apostasy were warnings given by an apostle before their departure. Apostasy is about a *departing from doctrine*: '*Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats...*' (1Tim.4:1-3). The seriousness of this should not be underestimated - it is about '*seducing spirits and doctrines of devils*'! The Roman Catholic religion forbids their clergy to

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

Dear Terry, in Eph.1:4 why does the NIV Bible have a full stop after 'sight'?

Editor's reply: The NIV reads '*For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will*'. NT Greek does not punctuate with as many full stops as English does and it will often read as a series of clauses put together before finally coming to a stop. (Arguably this is particularly so with Paul's writings). When translators change this to English they must needs at times add in punctuation. However, my conviction is that there should *not* be a full stop in the NIV after '*sight*' in vs.4 as this cuts off the '*in love*' which should be part of that clause and not the next. Below I have put a literal translation from Greek for Eph.1:1-6 (as close as I can as to be readable). I have also inserted the *original punctuation marks from the Greek*. Thus you can judge for yourself how accurate is *any translation* of these verses. At the end I have also notated some other comments between the Greek and the NIV. Literal Greek to English: 1 '*Paul apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, [comma] to the saints who are in Ephesus and faithful in Christ Jesus: [colon] 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. [full stop] 3 Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, [comma] who [has] blessed us with every blessings spiritual in the heavenlies with Christ, [comma] 4 According as he [has] chose[en] us in him before [the] foundation of [the] world, [comma] for us to be holy and blameless before him in love, [comma] 5 [Having] predestinated us for adoption through Jesus Christ to himself, [comma] according to the good pleasure of his will, [comma] 6 To [the] praise of [the] glory of [the] grace of his, [comma] in which he [has] made objects of grace us in the beloved [one]. [full stop]*

Further 'technical' notes on Eph.1:1-6 NIV: 1. The word '*praise*' in vs.3, although it may fit the context, is not literal to Greek which has other words for 'praise'. The Greek word here '*eulogotos*' is more literally '*blessed*'.

2. The word translated '*for*' in vs. 4 is '*kathos*' - literally '*according*' rather than '*for*'. (*'for*' is another Greek word '*ean*' used to connect phrases).

3. The word '*creation*' ('*ktisis*') in vs.4 is actually a close synonym of '*foundation*' ('*katoble*') but not the Greek word that is '*foundation*'. So, '*creation*' here is not quite as literal as '*foundation*' in other versions.

4. The NIV has added '*as his sons*' in vs.5 which is a repetition of the word '*adoption*' (literally '*sons*'/'*placed*'). So, there is a doubling up of one word in Greek into two phrases in English.

5. The Greek word '*beloved*' in vs.6 is actually referring to a single person, *not the saints*, as is commonly misunderstood. The Greek word is a first person singular - it is referring to *one person* - the Jesus Christ of vs.7.

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

Retraction

(Website Comment referring to the article 'Hell - Eternal')

'Hell - Eternal? This is a total myth. Hell is an English translation of many different words, as I am sure you are aware...Jesus definitely did NOT speak about hell more than heaven. Any concordance confirms this!!! Read your Bible properly before making absurd pronouncements.'

Editor's reply:...In 15 years of *Diakrisis* ministry, this is the second public retraction we have had to make, so I hope it is the last. I thank you for bringing this to my attention. I apologise for the statement that *'Jesus spoke of Hell three times more than heaven'*. It is true that the word Hell is not mentioned as many times as Heaven, and Jesus did speak about Heaven more than Hell. What I should have written was that Jesus spoke and warned much about Hell in clear and concise terms in many Scriptures; and that Heaven is arguably rarely mentioned describing the place, except for the description of the 'New Jerusalem' (Rev.21). Looking up 'Heaven' and 'Hell' in a concordance could give confusing results. 'Heaven' is spoken of in different terms (eg. *'Abraham's bosom'* (Lk.16:22); *'Father's house'* (Jn.14:2). Depending on the terms, I agree the statistics would vary.

As for the word *'Hell'* - you don't need to go into semantics in English - you only need to look at the *context* when Jesus talks about this *future* place to see what the meaning of 'Hell' is. (I am aware the word was originally used for the 'Valley of Hinnon'. But Jesus used this term for a *future* place).

On the 'eternity of Hell': Those that deny the eternity of Hell often use obscure OT Scriptures and fail to deal exegetically and objectively with the Scriptures that *plainly* speak of Hell as *eternal*. Hell is spoken of *many times* as being *'everlasting'*, *'eternal'* and *'forever and ever'*. The Bible clearly teaches that those who *'know not God'* and *'do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ...shall be punished with everlasting destruction...'* (2Thess.1:8,9). The fire that destroys is *'everlasting fire'* (Matt.25:41). If this is not proof enough of Hell being eternal, then the following verse is irrefutable: *'And these shall go away into everlasting ('aionion') punishment: but the righteous into life eternal ('aionion')'* (Matt.25:46). The Greek words here for 'everlasting' and 'eternal' are the same ('aionion'). The structure of the sentence means that if Hell is not 'eternal', then Heaven is also not 'eternal'! The Greek *'aionion'* shows a state that is perpetual, abiding, endless. This same word is used of the punishment of the wicked and of fire (Matt.18:8; 25:41,46; Mk.3:29; 2Thess.1:9; Heb.6:2; Jude 1:7); and also for the Holy Spirit (Heb.9:14), salvation (Heb.5:9), the Gospel (Rev.14:6), the new covenant (Heb.13:20) and the resurrected body (2Cor.5:1). If Hell is not unending than the above things are also not eternal!

marry and maintains an Old Testament style priestly cast as mediators between the people and God. Seventh Day Adventist set rules on *'meats'*. When there is *'hypocrisy'* there are *'lies'*. But this is not always 'open', for *'seducing spirits'* do not seduce openly but are often like *'an angel of light'* (2Cor.11:14).

Today we have new doctrines like never before. The Pentecostal/Charismatic movement has introduced in the last 120 years a whole range of teachings and doctrines to do with the Holy Spirit never heard of in 1,800 years. What better way to *'seduce'* people than to counterfeit the very Spirit of Christ? And do not *'doctrines of devils'* include those that would destroy the very foundation of Genesis - the headship of, and the order of God, man, woman? Has this not been done *in the last 50 years* with the widespread acceptance of women pastors, bishops and elders?

Apostasy is not just to do with doctrines, but also its fruit - *character*. 2Timothy 3:1-5 gives us a clear and precise list of what men will be like in the *'last days'* as they deny God Himself: *'This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away'*

How many churches today warn God's sheep that we are in *'perilous times'*? The above list of fleshly traits are now magnified *in today's religious leaders*. Do not many of them 'deny the power' within and rather teach a works based or social gospel? If you don't believe this then watch the Christmas and Easter messages given by our major church leaders. You will rarely find any real Gospel content or Jesus Christ mentioned! Yet many call these men 'Christians' because they *'have a form of godliness'*. And what of the command: *'from such turn away'*. How many of today's preachers mention this or warn their sheep?

Paul continues in 2Timothy 4:3-4 *'For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables'*. Is it not true that millions of Christians today *'heap'* to themselves teachers, *'having itchy ears'*? Look at the *largest* 'Christian' ministries with the *most* followers - men like Benny Hinn, who the faithful give millions of dollars each year helping them to own their private jets and continue to

fleece the sheep, lie about their healing's and produce numerous false prophecies! Many of these men are teaching *'fables'* (*'múthos'* - literally 'fabricated 'myths' in the mind'). They teach these 'fables' as *new* doctrines. How many preachers today warn the beloved as Jude did *'Beloved...it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the*



faith which was once delivered unto the saints' (Jude 3). Do we warn God's people as Jude did of the '*certain men crept in unawares*', '*ungodly men*' (vs.4)? Jude calls them '*filthy dreamers*' (vs.8), '*brute beasts*' (vs.10), '*spots in your feasts*', '*clouds without water*' (vs.12), and '*sensual, having not the spirit*' (vs.19)!

Finally, one can hardly bypass the description of the Laodicean church (Rev.3:14-22). Whether the reader thinks this is only a first century church or it typifies a future church, there is no doubt that *the church of today fits this description*. It is '*lukewarm*' (vs.16), it fraternises with the world's philosophy and thinks it is '*rich*' when it is spiritually and scripturally bankrupt (vs.17). To this church Jesus '*stands at the door*' knocking and ready to come in and fellowship upon repentance (vs.19). The passage closes with this plea '*He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches*'.

The apostasy of the church in our day is preparing the way for accepting the Antichrist and the Great Whore of Babylon (Revelation 17:1-7). Only in the last 150 years has the church not been unified as to who this harlot church is! In most of 1,800 years and especially during the Reformation, the church was unanimous that the Roman church was the Antichrist system. Such Protestants clearly cited Revelation and Daniel to prove this. No other organisation matches Revelation 17 so closely.* Rather, the majority of churches today accept Roman Catholicism as a 'Christian' denomination! If this is not 'apostasy', then what is?

Those who resist the apostasy and teach 'sola scriptura' are increasingly becoming but a remnant. They will be frowned upon, separated and judged as theological dinosaurs by the modern church at large. But better to be judged by the Word of God than by professing Christians of the Laodicean spirit. Jesus said: '*He that rejects me, and receives not my words, has one that judges him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day*' (Jn.12:48)

Terry Arnold

* For proofs of this see our CD sermon on 'The Harlot Church'.

Modern Trends

...The Christian Research Association has found attendance at traditional Uniting churches across Australia has declined 30% over the past 10 years, while numbers at Catholic churches dropped 19%...The average age of people attending Catholic and Anglican churches is roughly 60...Pentecostal churches...are experiencing a dramatic increase in growth...by 27%...Small traditional churches will become a relic of the past...they can't compete with the facilities offered by larger neighbours...Pastor of Citylife Pentecostal Church, Paul Molyneux, said that the relevance of the Pentecostal church's message in everyday life is likely responsible for the growth of the Pentecostal denomination in Australia.

(CathNews Published: November 22, 2011; cited in *Apostasy Alert*, Nov/2011)

Editors Comment: '*relevance*' here often translates into 'worldly'. If not, then it certainly is not doctrine, for most of these 'mega' or Pentecostal churches have little or no doctrinal emphasis.

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

'Mantras' from the 'Berean Call'

'It is not love of any kind to fail to rescue any who could be rescued. Calvinism claims that God could save everyone if He so desired, but doesn't. That is not love'. (Berean Call, Dec, 2011)

Editors comment: Although I personally reject the label 'Calvinist', I do marvel at statements such as the one above, recently published in Dave Hunt's *Berean Call* newsletter. What is written here completely misrepresents genuine historical 'Calvinistic' theology. Additionally, it sets up an emotive 'strawman' argumentation. It is what is *not said* that is mischievous. One-liners like this have become the trademark or 'mantra' of the *Berean Call*.

Their statement *confuses love with justice!* The same logic can be applied in reverse: Would God not have been totally just in leaving all to their punishment for sin? Would any accuse God of being 'unloving' in allowing this perfect justice? Nevertheless, this too is merely human 'logic' and leaves little room for His mercy poured out for the '*many*'.

Historic 'Calvinists' such as Spurgeon, Whitefield, Edwards, Newton, Wycliffe, Luther, Knox, Owen, Bunyan, Tyndale, Matthew Henry, JC Ryle, Martyn Lloyd Jones, et al, never taught of a God that '*fails to rescue any who could be rescued*'. Nor did they portray a God who '*does not desire to save everyone*'. These *negative and hypothetical* notions were generally not found in their theology. The *Berean Call* often repeats the mantra: '*a God who...predestines to eternal doom...to the lake of fire...who could save if he wanted to but chooses to...damn billions to eternal torment*' and '*is pleased to do so*'. Such emotive language is NOT what historic 'Calvinism' teaches.

The historic 'Calvinists' *positively* taught that God, of his own Will, elected some and left others as they were - *dead in sin*. The emphasis here is on the *positive* fact that God, in His perfect righteousness, actually stoops to save *anyone!* They never espoused a *negative* view which suggests God is 'unloving'. This logic and emotion simply does not do justice to the *positive* doctrines of election and Grace. God is never unloving in His election of the saints. He draws whom He will and provides Grace and Mercy. However, He would in no way be 'unloving' if He had simply left *all* of fallen mankind to the appropriate *justice* their sins demanded! And who are we to define who God can love and how He loves? Is the love of a mother for her child not different to the love she has for other children? Why is God not allowed to have a special love for His elect? We are the 'pots' not the 'Potter'! (Rom.9:21). Does not the Potter have power to make one vessel different to another (Rom.9:21-23)? These *Berean Call* 'mantras' are cheap, shallow and misrepresent what the great divines taught down the running centuries.

love theories and the abstract. I often have people ask me about various theological theories they have developed which are not plainly stated in Scripture. Even though their theory may be logical and even a possibility, my Sola Scriptura answer is sometimes annoying to them when I say: 'I don't know...I cannot find anything in Scripture to support your theory'.

No matter what kind of thinking you have, sound exegeses requires some critical thinking and the use of skills of accuracy and precision. (We are not here referring to 'higher criticism' which has questioned the inspiration of the original texts). Such objective critical thinking observes the words and the evidence of the text closely and then judges according to the facts. One must be objective and set strict boundaries in leaving behind ones tradition and theological bias. Also, we do not have to immediately understand every text!

Conclusion:

Objective Biblical thinking designates a mode of reasoning based on the reality of the Bible being the God-breathed inspired and inerrant Word to man. The knowledge that comes from this thinking is based on objective evidence - *the facts of the text*. The objective thinking that is necessary to avoid serious error in doctrine is similar to the diagnostic thinking that is required of a medical trauma team in the event of a life and death situation; or the thinking required by NASA in the life and death event of equipment failure of a space shuttle full of astronauts - the thinking required in these situations needs to be *objective*, dealing in *facts*; it cannot afford to be mixed with emotive or subjective reasoning.

'**Rightly dividing the Word of Truth**' (2Tim.2:15) is similar to Bible translation. Translating from Greek to other languages is a serious, exacting and fearful task because we are dealing with God's own Word! So, why is interpreting and reading Scripture any less grave? Both translating and interpreting are well defined 'sciences' with hermeneutical principles that require objective and exact thinking. There is no room for conjecture, bias or 'free thinking' in these fields.

The problem with much Christian thinking today is the *lack of discipline* to think objectively and to *see what is only in the text*. Subjective and emotional thinking rules the day in many minds. When dealing with doctrine and interpreting Scripture, the difference between objective and subjective thinking is so vital that wrong thinking can lead to an outright denial of Scriptural truths.

I urge the reader to believe what is read objectively in Scripture as fact. When it is plain language, then accept it. A Bible believing Christian must have all thoughts ultimately *objectively* filtered through a conscience that is captivated by *facts* within the written Word of God. The subjectivity of today's eisegesis must be brought under control, lest truth be abandoned and God's Word nullified. '**Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth**' (2Tim.2:15).

Terry Arnold

Religious Leaders Join Pope for Peace

[Editor's comments in bold and brackets] *Assisi, Italy: Pope Benedict XVI joined Buddhist monks, Islamic scholars, Yoruba leaders and a handful of agnostics in making a communal call for peace Thursday, insisting that religion must never be used as a pretext for war or terrorism. [Has he forgotten the inquisition, the reformation massacres, the crusades?]*



Benedict welcomed some 300 leaders representing a rainbow of faiths to...commemorate the 25th anniversary of a day long prayer for peace...Present were Buddhist monks [and] four people who profess no faith at all...He said...'religion is now frequently being used to justify violence'...'The horrors of the concentration camps reveal with utter clarity the consequences of God's absence', said Benedict, who as a young German was forced to join the Hitler Youth. [A young Ratzinger saluted Hitler...was he 'forced' into doing this as a priest?]



Traditional Catholics condemned the Assisi meeting ...as they did the one in 1986 - saying it was blasphemy for the Pope to invite leaders of 'false' religions to pray to their God's for peace'...The Society of St. Pius X, a breakaway traditionalist group...said it would be celebrating 1,000 Masses to atone for the damage done by the event and urged the Pope to use it to urge others to convert to Roman Catholicism...

...The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, the head of the world-wide Anglican Communion [and part-time Druid] and one of the first speakers at the peace meeting, said...the meeting would show the world that through their distinctiveness, different faiths provide the wisdom to draw upon...Thursday's meeting also included Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and representatives from Greek, Russian, Serbian and Belarusian Orthodox churches as well as Lutheran, Methodist and Baptist leaders. Several rabbis were joined by some sixty Muslims, a half-dozen Hindus and Shinto believers, three Taoists, three Jains and a Zoroastrian...All the delegates travelled together to Assisi on a special papal train..'

(Nicole Winfield www.news.yahoo.com 27 October 2011; *Apostasy Alert* 28th Oct.)

Jonathan Edwards on the Church of Rome

'During this time also superstition and ignorance more and more prevailed. The Holy Scriptures by degrees were taken out of the hands of the laity, the better to promote the unscriptural and wicked designs of the pope and the clergy; and instead of promoting knowledge among the people, they industriously promoted ignorance...The superstition and wickedness of the church of Rome, kept growing worse and worse till the very time of the Reformation'.

The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Part IV

How Do You Think?

Increasingly I am surprised at how Christians *think* and *interpret* the Word of God. Even texts that make plain sense are twisted to accommodate one's logic, emotions or another theological system. Varieties of subjective thinking increasingly come into play. Some call it 'post-modern thinking' - where there are no longer any absolutes and thus allowing many different interpretations, whichever sits comfortably within the heart of man. Yet if one studies the commentaries of yesteryear, a uniformity of interpretation is found upon *most* passages of Scripture. Common ground was to be found on most occasions - even within the more 'difficult' passages. Not so in the 20th Century. At the root of why Christians increasingly interpret Scripture so differently is because Scripture no longer is something in which God is sovereign and man is subservient to God's word; but rather man is now able to interpret Scripture to satisfy himself. The issue here is the pride of man, but also it is arguably a subtle attack on the very inspiration of Scripture.



The Word is not subject to us; we are subject to the Word!

The change in thinking in modern times runs parallel with the lack of both expositional preaching and sound Biblical exegesis of Scripture. Expositional preaching or reading requires working through Scripture verse by verse and allowing the texts to speak for itself. This is different to 'topical' preaching or reading which has one selecting a topic and then applying relevant texts systematically to that subject. When travelling I do a lot of 'topical preaching' which can be helpful for teaching on various issues and in exposing error. But over the course of time in a local church I am convinced that expositional preaching will far outweigh topical preaching in its benefits for those wishing to delve deeper into what the Holy Spirit is *actually* saying.

Thinking - Exegesis or Eisegesis?

One of the reasons why thinking is today so varied in interpretation of Scripture is *the lack of exegesis* by those teaching and preaching. Exegesis is the discovery of what the original author meant at the time the text was written. It utilises methods that pull apart the text by studying words, phrases, the original grammatical and historical contexts and then putting the parts back together again to establish the true sense of the passage. It does not allow 'reading into the text' foreign, logical or emotional ideas. That is 'eisegesis'.

So much of today's *thinking* is eisegesis...

Example 1: A test I have used when teaching students in colleges is to ask questions that test the subjective, emotional and logical content of their thinking. For example, I ask: 'Do all infants that die go to be with the Lord?' Answers usually vary: 'Yes, Scripture implies...'; 'It would only be fair if they did...an injustice would

believed in its plain sense: '**No man can come to me, except the Father which has sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day**' (Jn.6:44). The danger of denying or changing one or the other of seemingly opposing propositions is that the sovereignty of God is diminished, grace is less unmerited and God's Word is nullified!

Example 7: I have been amazed at what people read into Romans 8:29-30 '**And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified**'. The 'foreknow' is today *commonly* interpreted that 'God foreknows *who will accept or reject him in the future*' and thus His 'predestination' is based on that ability or 'free will' within man. Again, this thinking is rooted in the early heresies of Pelagian and Cassian. However, *there is no 'free will' or any mention of man doing anything in this text! There is absolutely nothing about unsaved man choosing salvation in this text.* The text does not say God foreknew *any action* by man but that He foreknew *the person* ('whom' is the object of the verb 'foreknow'). And every action in Romans 8:29,30 is *by God* and taken *before the foundation of the world!* The word '**also**' in Romans 8:29 ('**For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate**') links foreknowledge to predestination. Neither one is conditional on the other.

The Heart of the Issue:

A departure from sound thinking can be traced through the various eras of culture down through the centuries. The era of 'Modernism' was heralded by the 'Renaissance' period which exalted man and his abilities. The 'Enlightenment' period which began in the 1600's exalted human reasoning. The 'Industrial Revolution' from the 1700's to the 1800's saw great advances in technology and again caused man to depend on and esteem his own abilities. This arguably caused him to think inwardly to self and *away from absolutes*. 'Darwinism' then furthered this 'ability' of man and helped him to explain away his beginnings and thus his destiny. But it is 'Postmodernism' in the late 20th century that has cemented this shift in thinking. Truth no longer existed in any absolute sense. Modernism has brought in the thinking that truth can be discerned by reason and logical argumentation...truth is not objective. *It is this thinking that has pervaded the church today in the area of doctrine and interpretation.*

No doubt people have brains that are 'wired' different for thinking processes. Some are more logical, more emotional, or more subjective. Some are 'sequential thinkers' and process information in an orderly, linear way. Others may be 'random thinkers', more 'creative' and divergent in their thought processes and thus prone to stray to alternative interpretations 'outside the box'. Some are 'abstract random thinkers' who will meditate, reflect with feelings and emotion and personalise; they

longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory' (Rom.9:14-23).

These texts are not just about the sovereignty of God. They are about believing the objective facts of Scripture, even though our human minds might **'reply against God'** (vs.20) by questioning the reasons behind the actions of God! It's about warning us to *think* of ourselves as 'pots' subject to the 'Potter'!

Are we employing logic or emotion when studying Scripture? Or are we rightfully and objectively viewing and believing what is actually written? Again, there is nothing wrong with thinking in a logical or emotional manner. However, when dealing with Biblical 'doctrine' it is imperative that our thought processes firstly be *objective* to allow the facts of the text to be properly understood; and that we not allow subjective or emotive reasoning's to be added to that truth.

Subjective thinking with regards to doctrine is fraught with danger. For example, I may think something is 'beautiful' but the next person may disagree. Such is the nature of subjective thinking! *When dealing with doctrine, any logic must be based on objective facts and must not stray from that. Logic must not attempt to solve seeming contradictions in Scripture or questions in our mind; but must constantly be tested by only the objective facts of Scripture.*

Example 6: I have been amazed at what people will do with John 6:44 which clearly has an absolute *negative*: **'No man can come to me, except the Father which has sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day'**. **'No man'** means **'no man'**! The word **'except'** means only those the Father draws; and all those **'drawn'** will be raised up. Every word is clear and precise! Although the verse might not make sense to our frame of understanding of salvation, nevertheless that's what the text says! It's not up to us to re-think these passages. It's God's sovereign right to state such concepts even if they do not make sense to our finite minds! No gymnastics or re-interpreting is necessary!

The problem often is that people cannot accept propositions that are not logical to their minds; or that two propositions that appear to be opposites may still be true. For example, the responsibility of man to repent of his sins and God's sovereign unconditional election are both stated clearly in Scripture. To some people these appear to be opposites, because *logically* why would God command people to repent if they were not predestined and elected? Yet Scripture is replete with verses that objectively teach that there is an *inability* of man to believe the Gospel unless the Spirit of God intervenes (Rom.8:7; Jn.6:44); yet the Gospel is to be believed! In an effort to harmonise or reconcile these seemingly opposing truths, many *re-think* the texts! But *it is God who must reconcile such opposing truths, not us!* And He does! To his own disciples who asked **'Who then can be saved?'**, Jesus replied **'The things which are impossible with men are possible with God'** (Lk.18:23-27). Without the drawing by the holy Spirit man will *naturally* reject the Gospel (Rom.8:6,7; 1Cor.2:13; Rom.3:11; Eph.2:3). Hence the phrase in Jn.6:44 should be

be done if not'; *'They must, because God is love'*. Then I enquire of them: *'But what does the Bible say on this subject?'* It soon dawns on them that Scripture is arguably silent on the matter. The great Charles Spurgeon admitted he could not establish from Scripture a belief that babies went to Heaven at death and he was not prepared to base a doctrine on it. His thinking was *Sola Scriptura*. The question that should guide our thinking in interpretation is *'What do the Scriptures objectively say?'*

Example 2: I have been amazed at what people do with the many and clear Scriptures that teach Hell to be an eternal punishment. Subjective and emotive thinking can reject *true* dichotomies. In Scripture we have an antinomy: the dichotomies of the anger/wrath of God *as well as* the love of God. Today's emphasis is on the 'love of God' whilst dismissing the truth of His justice, wrath and judgment upon sin. Thus, Hell and eternal punishment are now increasingly rejected by people logically and emotionally applying the 'love of God' in their studies - again this is *eisegesis*.

Modern arguments against an eternal punishment in Hell may be logical to *our way of thinking*. But this contradicts many *plain* and objective Scriptures dealing with this subject (Matt.18:8; 25:41,46; Mk.3:29; 2Thess.1:9; Heb.6:2; Jude 1:7)

Example 3: I have been amazed at what some will do with John 3:16 in an effort to anchor their belief that the phrase *'whosoever believes'* is about 'free will' or 'anyone who chooses'. Yet even a basic exegesis of the word *'whosoever believes'* will show it literally means 'all the believing ones'.* And John 3:16 nowhere speaks of human 'free will'. An objective exegesis will show that the text says 1. God loved the world (His creation) 2. He gave His only Son 3. Those that truly believe in Him would not perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16 says *nothing* about 'choosing', nor the process that caused the 'whosoever' to believe. It simply says *those that believe will be saved!* Objectively John 3:16 says: God loves His creation; He gave His only son; that the *'whosoever believes'* (literally 'the believing ones'), will believe in Him and not perish but have everlasting life. *Anything beyond that is extra Biblical!*

Example 4: I have been amazed at the interpretive 'gymnastics' people will perform with texts that clearly teach that elders/pastors are to be male (1Tim.3:2; Tit.1:6; 1Tim.2:12, etc). Rather than take the *plain meaning* (which can be

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* *'Whosoever'* has been arguably corrupted from its original English understanding. The literal translation for the Greek *'pas'* (*'whosoever'*) is *'all'* or *'everyone'*. *'Pas'* is translated over 1,000 times in the New Testament and is mostly translated *'all'*; *'every'*; *'every one'*. The Greek here for *'whosoever believes'* is *'all the believing ones'* - with the definite article *'the'* (*'pas o pisteuon'*). *The definite article ('o' - 'the')* here refers to a definite number, quantity or entity. The common misconception is that *'whosoever'* is an indefinite phrase; but the definite article *'the'* (*'o'*) modifies a particular object - the object here is the *'believing ones'*. This is a definite group of people who will believe, not an indiscriminate or indefinite group! The verse is not about 'anyone' but literally about *'the believing ones'*.

proved irrefutably by sound exegesis), many today will change the sense or revert to other passages (which often don't primarily deal with the issue) and so end up espousing the very opposite view of what the text is saying! They have elders as being *'the wife of one husband'* instead of the *'husband of one wife'*!

Example 5: I have been amazed at what some will do with verses that clearly teach *predestination*. Many will remove the *'pre'* from the word so that it no longer means *'before the foundation of the world'* (Eph.1:4). Therefore it now becomes something God will only do at a later stage based on what man *may* do with his supposed 'free-will'. *The treatment of this subject is one of the most telling signs revealing the way we think!* Many Christians use emotion and logic when attempting to understand the doctrines of election and predestination. So called 'difficult' passages found in Ephesians 1 and Romans 9 are either ignored or twisted to show a bias toward the unbiblical notion that fallen man is able to 'seek' and 'choose' salvation of his own volition. Many simply cannot bring themselves to believe that a loving God might *will* to choose some and not others. However, election and predestination are objective facts revealed in Scripture, despite that they might in some minds appear to defy logical, subjective and emotional human thinking. The question that should rule our thinking is *'What do the Scriptures objectively say?'*

Most of the great divines (George Whitefield, John Newton, Jonathon Edwards, David Brainerd, John Eliot, John Paton, Tyndale, Carey...Charles Spurgeon, Martyn Lloyd Jones...the list is long and distinguished) all thought objectively on these doctrines. They simply believed what the Word of God said about these subjects and *held their own logic and reasoning captive to that Word.*

It was Pelagius of the 4th century who, in denying predestination and election, developed the thinking that an unregenerate man in himself was capable of obedience and could use his apparent 'free will' to achieve salvation. His thinking was humanly *logical* but not based on the objective truths to be found in the Biblical texts. In his humanistic thinking he confused the *free will* possessed by Adam and Eve before the fall, with their *enslaved will* after the fall. This thinking led to the denial of the depravity of man and original sin. Pelagius ultimately taught that man could earn God's grace through salvation by his ability to operate a supposed 'free will' and his own merit. Pelagianism was unanimously condemned as heresy by the Council of Carthage in AD 418.

It was Cassian who later developed 'Semi-Pelagian' thinking which taught that God *assists* men with their wills in striving to be saved. Semi-Pelagian thinking was also condemned as heresy at the Council of Orange in AD 529. (Roman Catholicism later adopted semi-Pelagian views). These views resurfaced in the Arminian controversy of the 16th century when 5 points were put forth again denying the widely accepted truths of predestination and unconditional election. It was refuted by 5 points at the Synod of Dort in AD 1619 which some now call 'Calvinism', (which sadly is today confused with 'hyper-Calvinism').

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The 20th Century has seen the blind acceptance of all these *heresies!* But behind all of this is a problem in *thinking!* Whether our reasoning's and emotions can or cannot accept what the Scriptures objectively state, the *facts* remain the same: God chooses man in salvation. Man does not choose God (Eph.1:4,5; Jn.15:16; Rom.3:11) - yet our subjective *experiential thinking* when we 'came to the Lord' would tell us otherwise. Man is unable to come to God in and of himself for salvation unless the Holy Spirit draws him first (Rom.8:6,7; Rom.3:10-11; Jer.17:9; Is.64:6,7) and only by this drawing will the *'all'* that the Father has given, come (Jn.6:37) - yet our subjective *logical thinking* would immediately ask: 'why does God not 'draw' all to salvation'? God elects, chooses His people of His own determination (Eph.1:5,9,11; 1Thess.1:4; Tit.1:1; Rom.8:33; Jn.6:37;5:21; Rom.9:15-18; Gal.1:15,16) - yet our *humanistic thinking* would ask: 'but man is not just a robot; surely man must have some power within himself to play a part in predestination or election?'

The problem with such logic is that if extended it strays into extra-biblical thinking. An example is: If (A) God elects and predestines a people for himself; then (B) *He must unlovingly also elect, predestinate and damn the rest to Hell;* and (C) *if so, he unfairly loves only a select group of people*'. This thinking is (A) + (B) = (C). Yet (B) is not found in Scripture, which does not teach that God actually 'predestinates' people to Hell. The premise (C) then becomes the ground for a 'strawman', something which has no bearing on the topic and is then used to prove the original premise (A) to be 'false'. The problem with this human logic is that it bypasses and *adds* to the *original objective facts* of Scripture (A) - which states that God does elect a certain people to glory.

To show further the folly of 'strawman' thinking, consider such logic but *in reverse*. If God is unfair in such matters of election and predestination, then would He have been unjust in allowing *all* peoples after the fall of Adam and Eve, to go to Hell? By the *same logic* the answer has to be 'yes' - God would have been unjust in allowing such a punishment. Yet *objectively* it would have been deserved. Is Hell fair?...objectively, 'yes'. Otherwise, the same reasoning for God being 'unjust' in election and predestination must also be applied here! *This counter logic shows the need for an objective and absolute standard based on facts from God's Word.*

God has already anticipated this difficulty in our minds and He warns us: ***'What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy... Therefore has he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens. You will say then unto me, Why does he yet find fault? For who has resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who are you that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why have you made me thus? Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much***